

# Life at Unity

June 03, 2025

## MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

We are coming to the end of a two-year Annual Vision of Ministry: God's Story and Our Stories. It has been a wonderful vision that drew together our ministry toward a common theme and inspired creativity and faith!

You might remember this quote from Mark Yaconelli, the author of one of our All Church Reads: "If we don't pay attention to the relational nature of stories - both in their telling and in what is told - then we end up with stories (no matter how powerful their content) that function as junk food for the soul. Or worse, instruments of control and sedation." (*Between the Listening and the Telling: How Stories Can Save Us*).

As this Annual Vision comes to a close, I encourage you to reflect back on what you've learned about God's story and our story. Where have you seen your story and our church's story join God's story? What new voices have you heard as we sought to share our own experiences of God's grace? How does our history prepare us for the future God has in store? What story are you living and what story still waits to be told?

Rachel Mann, a priest in the Church of England, suggests that the kind of Christian story that is viable in our time is:

A story that has the character of a song one would want to sing, both alone and with others. A song that sings of the abundance of love. This is a song that holds all the stories we shall ever own up to and those that we, through shame or failure, cannot; it is a song that sings all the griefs we shall ever know; it is a song that does not need to be sung for it is always being sung in the silence of the universe, in the stirrings of birds, in the breeze and storm that tickle and shake trees; it is a song of industry and of rest. It is the sustaining song of the world. ... It is the universe hallowed and shot through with glory and grace and wounds. It is Christ who holds the world's griefs in his wounds and continues to cry out for a world of wounds at the Father's throne. It is the little story and the great one. It is a line of poetry and an epic. It is a word barely mumbled and the grandest novel. It is silence and the most riven cry. It is the word that dwells and drifts and anchors. It is the song that sings us in all our moments—our births, deaths, dreams, triumphs, and failures, in our competence and our ineptitude. It is the bread and cup that sustain us and expose our limitations. It is the precarious body that cannot be destroyed. (*Christian Century*, December 2022).

May we keep reading, keep telling, keep listening, and keep living God's Story and Our Stories, for they remind us who and whose we are, and who we are called to be.

God bless,  
Matt



Since 1788...  
*United in Christ's love,  
we glorify God through worship,  
nurture, and service to all people.*

The deadline to submit items for  
the June 17th Newsletter is  
**Wednesday, June 11th.**

## PRAYER CHAIN

Did you know that Unity has an email prayer chain? If you would like to receive prayer concerns or have a concern, please contact Dannie Vaughn at [vaughndl@comporium.net](mailto:vaughndl@comporium.net).

**Please welcome the  
following new members  
received by Session  
5/27/2025**

Cecil & Susie Hinton

Dave & Nancy Hunt

Debbie Kimsey

Earl & Valerie Pettit

Leslie & Jerry Watkins

Tim & Jeanie Whitten

Dawn Williams-Zabicki

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday  
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(Closed on Fridays)  
803.547.5543  
[www.UnityFortMill.org](http://www.UnityFortMill.org)

## LATE JUNE BIRTHDAYS

16 -- Heidi Hudson; Joan Martin; Terry Pait; Mac Young

17 -- Cooper Briggs; Dan Couchenour; Heidi Ernst; Julie Hooper

18 -- Norah Brindisi; Ellen Clarke; Willa Mabe

19 -- Connie Grantham; Eric Hunsberger

20 -- Matthew Pearson; Blake Renken; Miller Shouse; Kylie Spangler

21 -- Sandy Rea; Joan Reid

22 -- Lauren Clarke; Collin Olinger; Mary Fields Spratt; William Wilkins

23 -- Joe Flory; Eloise Scott; Spratt White

24 -- Sue Carlton; Jackson Chamberlain; Scott Cost; Easley Griffin; Seth Hall; Lauren Matherly; Charlotte Veltri

25 -- Ellen Carter; Kim Dellinger; Scott Kuebler; Graham Liebert; Elizabeth Mix; Brian Rayl; Brenda Young

26 -- Lillian Coker; John Matherly; Krista Renken

27 -- Pat Bartlett; Ann Wisz

28 -- Cody William Thomas; Kaylee Wolfe

29 -- Henry Donato; John Dorosh; Bennett Fulton; Heather Lovette; Laurie Rogers; Hawke Woodward

30 -- Hannah Couchenour; Jace Griffin; Donna Maloney; Jackson Ringley; Alex Weller

## "TENDING THE SOUL" - SUMMER PREACHING & WORSHIP SERIES

After living into the vision "God's Story and Our Stories" for the last two years, concluding with our current Easter Season series on the Book of Revelation, we sensed a need this summer to collectively pause and consider the spiritual gifts and practices that sustain us as we engage as disciples in the world and look forward to a new vision together. So, **our preaching and worship series for June and July**

**will be "Tending the Soul."** While each week will stand alone, we hope you will join us for this series as we grow, explore, and reflect together:

- June 15 - Rest
- June 22 - Being Present
- June 29 - Saying No
- July 6 - Nourishment
- July 13 - Community
- July 20 - Dwelling in God's Word
- July 27 - Wonder, Awe, and Beauty



## SABBATICAL - DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MARGARET MONROE

Unity Presbyterian Church has long granted sabbatical leave to Ministers, Certified Educators, and Church Professionals according to approved guidelines. As recommended by Providence Presbytery's Sabbatical Leave policy, "Sabbatical leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of renewal through the Sabbath day and Sabbath year." It is a time to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily congregational life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the church leader's heart sing.

In recognition of her seven years of faithful ministry at Unity Presbyterian Church, Margaret Monroe is eligible for sabbatical. With the approval, prayers, and full support of the Human Resources Ministry Team, the Session, and Dr. Rich, Margaret's sabbatical **will begin on Monday, June 23rd, and she will return on Monday, August 4th.** She will be attending conferences, spending time with family, working on complex organ pieces, plus worshiping and learning from other congregations and faith communities. Margaret shared, "I am so appreciative to the church for this time of renewal, and I look forward to returning refreshed and ready for the upcoming program year!"

During this time, so that Margaret can focus on rest and renewal, she will not be answering phone calls, text messages, or emails. If you have questions that you would normally ask Margaret, please reach out to Matt Rich or the chair of the Worship and Music Ministry Team (Lauren Mobley). Patsy Surratt will be playing for worship on Sundays and working with the choir.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let us know and begin praying that this time of Sabbatical will be an opportunity for rest and renewal for Margaret as well as a chance for new growth for our congregation.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR - WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM EACH SUNDAY IN JULY



We had so much fun last summer, we've decided to do it again. We will hold a **single worship service each week at 10:00 AM each Sunday in July**. Unity traditionally participates in Change for the Church with casual dress and a special offering in July, so we'll also change our worship time to all worship together. Children in Worship and Nursery will be offered at this service as well

as Family Choir. So, go ahead and change your calendars to note that we'll worship at 10:00 AM each Sunday in July - and come early because it means the sanctuary will be full each week!

## SUMMER ALL-CHURCH FAITH FORMATION

**Road Trip:  
On the Go with God**

**All-Church Faith Formation**  
Sundays at 10:00 am  
in June  
Fellowship Hall

Join us for an interactive Bible story each week reminding us that  
***"The Lord our God is with us  
wherever we go."***

We'll explore a variety of responsive activities that help us connect these stories to our own journeys with God. Come any Sunday you are in town for a trip through the Bible you won't want to miss!

For people of all ages  
No registration needed

Nursery provided for children 3 and under



## WEDNESDAY DANCE FITNESS CLASSES - modified summer schedule

The Dance Fitness classes will meet every other week in the summer. Both classes (Rhythm-n-Moves at 9:30 a.m. and Line Dance at 10:30 a.m.) will meet on June 4th, June 18th, July 2nd, July 16th, and July 30th. We will return to meeting every week beginning in August.

## VOLUNTEER TO HELP RECYCLE HERE AT CHURCH

As a community of faith, we are always discerning how we can be good stewards of all that God has given us, including the creation around us. We have begun to recycle our paper again here on Unity's campus, and we are in need of volunteers to help us take that recycling to the recycling center each week. If you can help us with this effort, **please use the QR code to sign up** for a Thursday to come pick up recycling. Or if you are interested in learning more or have questions, please contact Rev. Molly Spangler at [mbspangler@unityfortmill.org](mailto:mbspangler@unityfortmill.org).



For more information on **"What's Happening"** at Unity, please visit...  
[www.unityfortmill.org/whats-happening/](http://www.unityfortmill.org/whats-happening/)



## WOMEN'S CHORUS

All women, young women, and girls (who are readers) of the church are invited to participate in a special Women's Chorus on Father's Day, June 15th. We will sing at both services, so you can choose which service you would like to attend. The rehearsal schedule is as follows: June 8th - brief rehearsal in the sanctuary following each service, June 15th - 8:15 or 10:30 in the choir room. The anthem is simple and easily learned—come make a joyful noise! Please contact Margaret Monroe at [mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org](mailto:mmonroe@UnityFortMill.org) with any questions.

## CHILDREN IN WORSHIP SUMMER SCHEDULE

CIW will be offered at the 8:45 service only in June and at the 10:00 am service in July. CIW will resume during both services in August. Rising 4K children (age 4 before September 1, 2025) are invited to attend beginning in June. Rising second graders may continue attending through July or begin sitting with their parents in the worship service and practicing their worship skills.

## STAY IN TOUCH

Whether you are looking for a specific activity or the latest news and information on children, youth, and adults, visit us at . . .

Website: [www.UnityFortMill.org](http://www.UnityFortMill.org)

Instagram: [@UnityFortMill](https://www.instagram.com/UnityFortMill)

Facebook: [@UnityFortMill](https://www.facebook.com/UnityFortMill)

Be sure to "like" our page.

## UNITY COLLEGE-AGED YOUNG ADULTS RECONNECT!

High school graduates and college-aged young adults had an awesome time gathering with new and old friends for dessert and fellowship. We enjoyed a devotion on Paul's letter to the Philippians and considered what it would look like to find joy in the ordinary moments of life together. Thank you to the Sharplesses for hosting this awesome evening!



## HIGH SCHOOL LAKE DAY WAS A BLAST!

Our high school kicked off summer with an awesome afternoon spent at Lake Wylie! Thank you to the Chamberlains, Glascos, and Watsons for hosting us!



## RSVP FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL POOL PARTY!

Rising 6th-8th graders are invited to join for a Pool Party hosted by Madelyn Mikulsky on **June 8th from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.** Visit <https://bit.ly/4kn1sZX> to RSVP.



## SAVE THE DATE FOR UNITY YOUTH MID-WEEK MISSION & ICE CREAM SUNDAYS THIS SUMMER!

We'll engage in outreach projects together on Wednesday mornings (RSVP at <https://bit.ly/3SBTeRJ>), and gather for ice cream together on Sunday afternoons!

### UNITY YOUTH SUMMER 2025



## MID-WEEK MISSION

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

6/4 (Defend the Fatherless, 10-11:30am)

6/18 (Bethel Men's Shelter, 9:30-1:30pm.  
Bring \$ for lunch at Hobo's! Transportation provided!)

7/23 (Adult Enrichment Center, 10-11:30am,  
more details coming soon!)

Registration & more details available on  
Sign-Up Genius!

### UNITY YOUTH SUMMER 2025



## ICE CREAM SUNDAYS

MIDDLE SCHOOL, 2-3PM  
HIGH SCHOOL, 3-4PM

6/15 (SweetFrog, 914 Smithfield Way)

6/29 (Whit's Frozen Custard, 1642 Hgwy 160 W)

7/13 (Cold Stone Creamery, 1329 Broadcloth St.)

7/20 (Scoop n' Swirl, 753 Crossroads Plaza)

No registration needed!

## UNITY MEN'S SOFTBALL TEAM

Did you know that Unity Presbyterian Church has a men's softball team in the Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Church Softball League? Yes we do! Our team plays both for fun and to make a run at the championship at the end of the season. We are recruiting both returning and new players for this year's team. All abilities are welcome (in emergency situations they even let the senior pastor play!), plus players get a cool Unity shirt. Games begin in June. Contact Sammy Pecarro ([samrpecarro21@yahoo.com](mailto:samrpecarro21@yahoo.com) or 803.571.2401) if you're interested in being a part of this year's team.



## MUSIC CAMP!



Save the date! Registration will open in the fall.

**Who?** Children age 4 (by September 1, 2025) through 5th grade

**What?** A VBS-style music camp where we'll learn and perform a musical!

**Where?** Unity Presbyterian Church

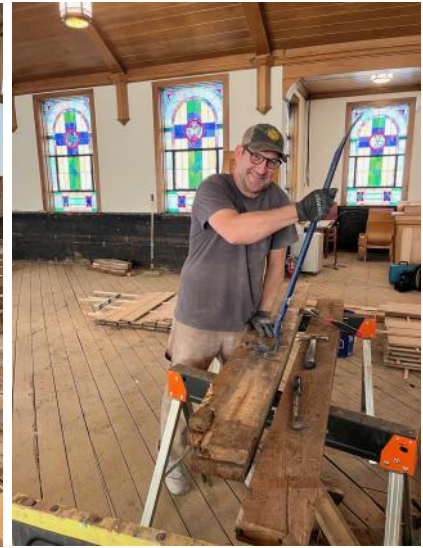
**When?** February 16-20, 2026, 9:00-12:30 (after care also available until 5:30 p.m.)

**Why?** To praise God through drama, dance, and music.



## HURRICANE RECOVERY CONTINUES

May 15-19, Rev. Max Russell from Woodlawn Presbyterian Church in Sharon, SC, and five members here at Unity Presbyterian traveled to Western, NC to help with continued hurricane recovery. Their main work site was Marshall Presbyterian Church (MPC). The church had disastrous damage to their building from hurricane Helene. Marshall is a small town about 20 min north of Asheville and sits on the French Broad River. This area had about 26 feet of water that demolished many structures and gutted all the ground level floors that were not swept away. This left several feet of mud in the structures. MPC has most of the mud removed and everything stripped down to the foundation and framing. They are very short on funds to rebuild so our team from Unity was tasked with rebuilding and cleaning the floor structure for their choir and pulpit areas. This included changing it to be one level instead of a terraced level. If MPC had to pay a contractor to do the work, it would be cost prohibitive (likely over \$15,000). Our team was able to complete this floor structure so the contractors can come to do the finishing work. Howard was our main contact from MPC and just so happened to chair the Building and Grounds committee when they suffered this damage. Howard and a few of the church members we met are so grateful for what the Unity team was able to accomplish and get them to their next phase of rebuilding. We were grateful to partner with Rev. Russell at Woodlawn for this effort, and hope to continue to serve together as we can as we look for more opportunities to support recovery efforts.



## DONATIONS FOR THE TRINIDAD SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Nine of Unity's members, July 9-18 will bring a mission trip to Honduras. This will be Unity's 12th trip to the municipality of Trinidad, Copan. We will be working in a 10-house project in the neighborhood of San Juan Planes. We will be accompanied by Tim Wheeler, retired PCUSA mission co-worker. Members of past teams have met many children that are now in their teens and need help in completing their education. The 2025 team plans to take a monetary donation for the Trinidad Scholarship Committee to help these young people. We are asking for your help. If you would like to make a donation, you may visit <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/-/form/give/default> to donate online on Unity's website using the account name "Adult Missions" and enter in the memo space "Honduras Scholarships". Scholarships of \$130/year for students in town and \$160 for students from communities that need transportation, to cover the cost of school supplies, books, uniforms, computers and printing supplies. The 2025 team of Bob Edwards, Brian Fish, Michaela Fish, Jonathan Mikulsky, Adam Rusch, Joyce Sullivan, Beverly Tysinger and Ken Tysinger thank you for your donations. **Donations should be made by June 22nd.**

## STEPHEN MINISTRY & CONFIDENTIALITY

A very important aspect of Stephen Ministry is confidentiality. Stephen Ministers go through exceptional training in all aspects of being a Stephen Minister, and they learn that quality care means keeping confidences when another shares them. Nothing that the care receiver might say goes beyond the Stephen Minister. Confidentiality is crucial in Stephen Ministry! You can trust a Stephen Minister.

To learn more about Stephen Ministry, talk to one of our referral coordinators, Susan Mobley or Dave Johnson via email at [Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org](mailto:Stephenministryreferrals@unityfortmill.org) or call Rev. Molly Spangler at the church office - 803-547-5543.

Our Stephen Ministers are here to care!



## ENDOWMENT IMPACT STATEMENT: NEEDLEPOINT PARAMENTS, A WORK IN PROGRESS

The Worship & Music ministry wanted to enhance our worship space with four sets of needlepoint paraments in each of the liturgical colors. Currently, fabrics of all 4 colors are paid for, thanks to an Endowment grant, and in storage at the church to be used when the pieces are stitched. The background fibers are all in stock and paid for. We have already begun stitching the purple set and one of the green pieces. We intend to do a Minute for Missions on June 8th to line up needle pointers to take on the two red pieces, the two white pieces, and bookmarks of all 4 colors. We are still waiting for the metallic fibers to use on the red set.

Below are photos of the green design and the purple design. Each color will have a separate design. Each large piece is 540 square inches of stitching, and the best stitchers can only do about 2 square inches per hour. This is a long process that promises to have a stunning outcome.





## CHANGE FOR THE CHURCH

**Beginning Sunday, July 6th, and continuing throughout the month of July,** we will collect our **CHANGE FOR THE CHURCH OFFERING.** During this time, we encourage everyone to collect their household change and donate to Unity for the following missions:



One-third of the Change for the Church offering will be used to provide school supplies for children in need in the Fort Mill School District through the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools' Classroom Ready project.

One-third of the offering will provide funds to the Syria/Lebanon Support programs

One-third of the offering will provide funds for Hurricane Helene relief and recovery efforts.

### Details of how to give are listed below:

- Visit <https://onrealm.org/unityfortmill/-/form/give/now> to give online, select the "Change for Church" fund from the list of available funds.
- Buckets will be placed in the Narthex of the Sanctuary during the month of July for you to bring your loose change, folding money and checks for this annual Change for the Church offering.
- If you would prefer to mail a check, please make checks payable to Unity Presbyterian Church and write "Change for Church" in the memo line.
- You can also drop off your offering to the "Change for Church" fund by placing it in the black mailbox in front of the Historic Sanctuary (no glass containers please).

## THANKS FOR "LIFTING UP" MINISTRY THROUGH UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Thanks to everyone who made a commitment to share their time, talent, and financial resources with Unity's ministry as part of this year's campaign. The ministry and programs of our church are only possible through your generous support.

- 1) We had a 12% increase in the number of Time and Talent forms received and an 8% increase in the number of pledges received.
- 2) We currently have effective pledges that total just above \$1,450,000. This level of effective pledges represents around a \$60,000 increase (around 4.2%) in pledges over last year's campaign.
- 3) Coupled with our projected starting cash funds, this level of projected giving puts us in a good position for funding next year's budget, of \$1,705,000, a 4.2% increase over our 24/25 budget. Our ministry leaders and staff continue to work hard to manage costs and be good stewards of the financial resources entrusted to them.

### 4) Increases in the budget will fund:

- Enhancing the security of the church campus by implementing a new door locking system.
- Increasing our support of Unity's outreach partnerships, helping those in need both physically and financially.
- Increasing our support for our growing children and youth ministries.
- Providing our talented staff with the raises needed to keep up with the rising cost of living.
- Addressing the general rising cost of ministry in areas such as maintenance, utilities, and insurance costs.

This is the fifth consecutive year of increase in your level of pledged giving. You have, once again, enthusiastically responded to our campaign, and we are very thankful for this generosity! We look forward to this next program year as we continue to "Lift Up" each other and our neighbors in faith and in love.



## WHAT IS A MAJOR MAINTENANCE RESERVE AND WHY DO WE MAINTAIN ONE?

A maintenance reserve is a dedicated pool of money set aside to cover the costs of maintaining and repairing our assets. It is a proactive financial strategy that contributes to the long-term financial health and stability of our property. Here are the reasons for establishing a maintenance reserve:

### 1. Ability to Cover Unexpected Repair Costs & Emergencies:

- Financial Safety Net: A reserve acts as a financial cushion to handle unexpected repairs, breakdowns, and emergencies, such as roof leaks, plumbing issues, or appliance failures.
- Prompt Repairs: Funds are readily available to address problems quickly, preventing further damage and minimizing disruptions.
- Avoids Debt Accumulation: Reduces the need to borrow money or use operating funds for unexpected expenses.

### 2. Preserves Asset Condition: Ensures regular maintenance and timely repairs, keeping assets in good and safe condition.

### 3. Ensuring Long-Term Cost Savings:

- Prevents Minor Issues from Escalating: Regular maintenance and prompt repairs can prevent minor problems from becoming major and costly issues.
- Extends Asset Lifespan: Proper maintenance and timely repairs can extend the lifespan of assets, reducing the need for premature replacements.
- Reduces Repair Costs: Addressing issues early can often be less expensive than dealing with extensive damage later.

### 4. Facilitates Better Financial Management:

- Consistent Cash Flow: A reserve fund helps to maintain consistent cash flow.
- Accurate Budgeting: Allows for better financial planning and budgeting by anticipating and allocating funds for future maintenance needs.

### 5. Compliance & Safety:

- Ensures Compliance with Regulations: Ensures that properties are maintained in compliance with building codes, safety standards, and legal requirements.
- Addresses Safety Hazards Promptly: Enables prompt repair of safety hazards and reducing potential liabilities.

**The established benchmark for Unity** is to maintain at least 5% of the insured value of the property in our maintenance reserve. As a result, we were able to immediately begin clean-up and repairs after our 2018 fire and have not had to cut ministry budgets to address unexpected repairs. During the past year, from our reserve, we have

- pointed up the brick mortar work in our walkways,
- painted the outdoor, metal railings
- addressed the paving issues campus-wide.

The paving project was a \$100,000+ expense and our reserves are now at 3.2% of the properties insured value of \$14,857,000.

Overall, we are financially sound, but Stewardship and the long-term planning committee will be working on plans to re-establish funds to our benchmark.

If you have any questions concerning our reserves, contact Pam Bright, Financial Manager, 803-547-5543 or [pbright@UnityFortMill.org](mailto:pbright@UnityFortMill.org).

Unity Presbyterian Church  
303 Tom Hall Street  
PO Box 1267  
Fort Mill, SC 29716-1267

[www.UnityFortMill.org](http://www.UnityFortMill.org)

JOIN US SUNDAY

8:45 a.m.  
In-Person/Livestream  
Worship

11:00 a.m.  
In-Person/Livestream  
Worship

Share Your  
Tithes and Offerings  
Online

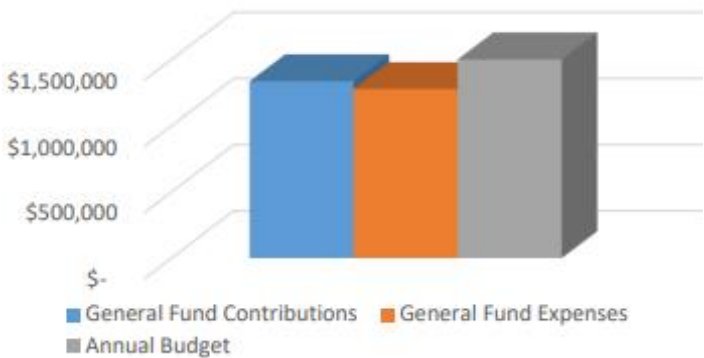


*Return Service Requested*

Thank you for supporting God’s ministry through Unity Presbyterian Church.

2024-2025 BUDGET UPDATE

Contributions & Expenses July - April  
Compared with the Annual Budget



	April 2025	Jul 1, 2024 through Apr 30, 2025	% of Annual Budget	5-Year Average
General Fund Contributions	\$ 112,960	\$ 1,334,985	81.6%	\$1,225,850
General Fund Expenses	124,743	1,276,224	78.0%	1,177,635
Annual Budget		1,636,321	100.0%	1,519,243

As you contemplate your legacy, please consider including Unity in your estate planning.